

WINTER
EDITION
JANUARY
2007



Child learn winter with Dave Digt of the
Kalamazoo Canoe & Kayak Club. Classes
start in January at the
Kalamazoo Central High School Pool.
Every Wednesday
from 7:00 to 8:30
Call: 269 668 2928

RIVER RAP NEWSLETTER

DECISION RELEASED FOR RIVERSIDE LANDFILLS

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) released a Record of Decision (ROD) for the site called "Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill" which is part of the larger Allied Paper, Inc./Portage Creek/ Kalamazoo River Superfund Site. The ROD is a document that details the decision the agency has made about the level of cleanup that will be undertaken at the site that USEPA believes will protect human health and the environment. This site is one of seven currently named sites, called Operable Units by the USEPA, that make up the overall Superfund Site. The ROD document (minus attachments) was released in September 2006 and is available for viewing on the following website: <http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject/index.htm>. Prior to this decision, several cleanup alternatives were presented in July 2005 and a public meeting was held in August 2005. USEPA responses to public questions, comments

and concerns are detailed within the recently released ROD.

The Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill site is located just east of downtown Kalamazoo on the southern bank of the Kalamazoo River. This site has been a source of PCBs to the Kalamazoo River and some limited interim measures were implemented to try to slow or stop the movement of PCBs to the Kalamazoo River. The final remedy detailed in the ROD will involve several steps.

Generally, the larger portion of the site, the A-Site, will remain in place in its current location within the floodplain of the Kalamazoo River. A metal retaining wall separating the A-Site from the Kalamazoo River, considered temporary when first installed, will also remain in place.

Contaminated materials removed from nearby adjacent floodplain areas and from the perimeter of the Willow Boulevard Landfill will be deposited in the A-Site Land-

fill. The perimeter will then be rebuilt with clean fill materials and engineered to be as natural as possible while still preventing future PCB movements to the Kalamazoo River according to the ROD.

Contaminated materials also will be removed from offsite areas on the opposite side of the Kalamazoo River (the Georgia-Pacific Mill and Hawthorne Mill), currently referred to as OU6 and OU7 by USEPA, and placed in the A-Site Landfill. According to EPA officials, the need to remove contaminated sediments from the Georgia Pacific/Hawthorne Mill was determined several years ago. The site was recently elevated to "time critical removal action" status and work began to transport contaminated sediments to the A-Site Landfill prior to December 4, 2006. Public notice was limited and released just before the public drop-in session that to place in Kalamazoo on December 4, 2006. Public

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KALAMAZOO RIVER

"Mediated Negotiations": Announcement Expected Soon

Parties involved in the Kalamazoo River Superfund cleanup have been meeting behind closed doors since August 2004 in what have been called "mediated negotiations". Involved parties signed a Mediation Agreement that does not allow them to release details to the general public. The stated purpose of the facilitated discussions is

"to overcome unique obstacles that have been impeding progress on the Kalamazoo River since it was listed on the National Priorities List (NPL) in 1990" according to a November 2006 USEPA Questions and Answers document. More specifically, a March 2005 EPA Fact Sheet indicated that the purpose of the negotiations was "...helping the par-

ties negotiate more studies at the site, payment of past costs incurred by the government agencies, and restoration of federal and state natural resources". The Kalamazoo River Watershed Council continues to stay in contact with Agency officials and has received unofficial word that an announcement is expected in early 2007.

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EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.

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notice requirements are minimal when a cleanup is considered to be a time critical removal action. Following this emergency cleanup, more detailed Remedial Investigations will be undertaken at OU6 and OU7 according to USEPA officials present at the public meeting on December 4.

After all nearby and offsite materials have been consolidated in the A-Site Landfill, both the Willow Boulevard and A-Site Landfill areas will be capped with waterproof membranes and clean fill materials. Cap maintenance and groundwater monitoring will be incorporated into the long range plan. Detailed plans will be developed as the project moves forward with engineering and design.

Several community groups including the Watershed Council have repeatedly expressed objections to leaving contaminated sediments in the Kalamazoo River floodplain, potentially exposed to catastrophic flooding and other river forces. In addition, groups have called for the need to remove more material in general and pull any remaining contaminated materials further back from the water's edge in order to naturalize what is now an undesirable sheet pile wall on the south bank of the river. The Watershed Council remains concerned that groundwater could be moving through the site, possibly transporting buried contaminants to the river, and that failure to address these issues now could lead to the need for new, future clean-ups to fix these problems. A-Site has no waterproof bottom liner, which is normally part of landfills built from scratch to house contaminated materials like those currently found in A-Site. The USEPA response to these concerns has been that these remedial actions will adequately prevent PCB movement to the Kalamazoo River and future monitoring will detect any problems. The USEPA has also indicated in the ROD that "There is no evidence of principal threat wastes at OU2, as current monitoring data does not indicate that there is a source material in the soil or groundwater".

WATERSHED RUNDOWN

The KRWC has been active on several fronts with both program and volunteer activities, and we have requested related updates from other watershed areas including:

- Jeff Spoelstra was hired in October as the Kalamazoo River Watershed Coordinator. Jeff's primary responsibilities will involve updating the Kalamazoo River Remedial Action Plan and developing a Nonpoint Source Pollution Watershed Management Plan. Jeff previously was an environmental consultant with Kieser & Associates, where he gained experience on several watershed planning projects in the southwest Michigan area, and he served on KRWC's Board of Directors for several years. Jeff is interested in exploring opportunities for expanding the KRWC into a sustainable watershed organization that serves the diverse needs of the community.
- A grant was recently received from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to purchase computer and presentation equipment for use in several of our resource planning and protection efforts. Fortunately, this grant arrived just after our main office computer went to cyber-heaven!
- Diverse stakeholders continue to participate in efforts to develop a Watershed Heritage Water Trail. See <http://www.wnuch.edu/glcms/watertrails/> for details about the Statewide program and to see draft maps and materials for the trail system. In a separate but related effort, the Kalamazoo River Protection Association is developing a recreation plan for the Kalamazoo River between Battle Creek and the City of Allegan. Contact the KRPA for more details at 269-686-7822.
- A local team of fish and wildlife managers is being formed to develop criteria to measure satisfactory restoration of fish and wildlife habitat and populations in the Kalamazoo River Area of Concern. This activity is part of a larger ongoing effort to restore the river ecosystem and is linked to the Remedial Action Plan.
- Focused stakeholders continued to meet over the past six months to plot a course for future operations and growth associated with our growth into an "umbrella organization". During the course of these efforts, KRWC's Vision, Mission, Goals, and Bylaws have been revised. The group continues to consider board development, membership services, and sustainable funding opportunities. The hiring of a Coordinator is being seen as a good step toward operating as a sustainable watershed organization, but work continues.
- From the City of Saugatuck - Two years ago, the City expanded its waterfront construction regulations to include docks of all kinds. This year the City qualified for a rate reduction on flood insurance premiums by providing property owners with information on flooding and construction in floodplains. The city is also exploring the concept of setting up a harbor plan with the City of Douglas and Saugatuck Township.
- From Four Township Water Resources Council - The Board of Directors Meeting is January 29, 2007, 7:00 PM, at the Kellogg Biological Station Carriage House Classroom, 3700 E. Gull Lake Drive. The public is welcome. For more information for either check the website, www.ftwrc.org, email mail@ftwrc.org or call Ken Kornheiser 269-664-4426 (daytime).
- KRWC and other groups in the Arcus Depot will participate in the March 2, 2007, ART HOP.

The
Kalamazoo
River
Watershed
Council needs
your support!

Yes! I Want to Help the Watershed Council help people make a connection with the Kalamazoo River!

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution to the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council

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Preferred Mailing Address _____ Home _____ Work _____

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Please make checks out to KRWC and mail to 408 E. Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

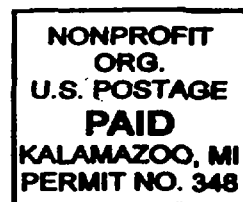
KRWC Leads Another "Kanoë the Kazoo" Trip

In late August KRWC led a canoe trip departing from Fort Custer State Recreation Area near Augusta and ending at Galesburg. The 35 paddlers included Board members Steve Hamilton and Larry DeLong. The flotilla of canoes and kayaks floated lazily through the pristine bottomland forest that lines most of this reach. Some excitement resulted when we had to negotiate a series of downed trees, and one cell phone jumped ship and met an untimely end, but otherwise the trip was mellow and enjoyed by all. Look for information from Binder Park Zoo, about 2007 Kanoë the Kazoo trips.



GLOBAL CITIZENS RIVER CONSERVATION DAY A HUGE SUCCESS

On October 7, 2006, communities within Calhoun and Eaton Counties conducted Global Citizens River Conservation Day. This event started in the Battle Creek area in 2001 and 700-750 volunteers turned out this year to help make the waterways within the Kalamazoo River Watershed healthier. The group picked up trash and tires, marked storm drains, removed invasive brush, and planted a rain garden with plants native to Michigan. Over 135 cubic yards of trash, dozens of tires, and 300 cubic yards of invasive brush were removed! Contact Chris Kosmowski with the City of Battle Creek for more information or see www.bcwater.org.



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CLIMATE CHANGE AND OUR WATER RESOURCES

Scientists are increasingly sounding the alarm about the ramifications of global climate change, which is evidently driven in large part by human sources of greenhouse gases and especially carbon dioxide from fossil fuels. Some of the most dramatic effects are taking place in other parts of the world such as the Arctic, but we can expect to see impacts here in Michigan.

The rise in average temperature during the past 50 years already has been associated with a 1-2 week longer growing season and with shorter duration of ice cover on local lakes, including Gull Lake in Kalamazoo County.

Models that project future changes in climate suggest that Michigan will experience much more warming in the coming century, but changes in precipitation are uncertain.

A warmer climate with no change in precipitation will produce notable impacts, even in our water-rich landscape. Lake levels, including those of the Great Lakes, are predicted to decline. Shipping in the Great Lakes and recreational boating in all kinds of waters would suffer as a result, and riparian landowners may find their waterfronts moving farther away.

Wetlands would increasingly dry (at least seasonally), and

many shallow lakes would become wetlands. The net result for wetland area is unknown.

Groundwater tables would eventually fall as well, impacting lakes, wetlands, streams and rivers fed by groundwater. Many water supply wells may extend safely below the range of variation, but communities dependent on surface waters for water supply and hydropower might suffer.

For a good summary on climate change impacts in our area, see this report by the Union of Concerned Scientists:

[http://www.ucsusa.org/
greatlakes](http://www.ucsusa.org/greatlakes)